

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~striketrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claim 7 and AMEND claims 1, 2, 9, and 10 in accordance with the following:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information-gathering method employed in an information-gathering system for holding dialogues with customers based on dialogue scenarios, the information-gathering method comprising:

- storing dialogue scenarios;
- storing billing criteria for billing for transmitted dialogue scenarios;
- ~~assigning~~ storing first correspondences between each of the dialogue scénarios and one or more destination addresses;
- ~~assigning~~ storing second correspondences between customer-identifying data and customer information;
- accepting input of the customer-identifying data;
- extracting from the dialogue scenarios, a dialogue scenario to be performed;
- holding a dialogue with a customer following the extracted dialogue scenario, the customer being identified based on the customer-identifying data;
- acquiring dialogue content from the dialogue;
- extracting customer information corresponding to the inputted customer-identifying data according to the second correspondences;
- associating the extracted customer information with the dialogue content;
- transmitting the dialogue content and the customer information to the one or more destination addresses corresponding to the extracted dialogue scenario according to the first correspondences;
- storing the dialogue content received at the one or more destination addresses; and
- outputting the dialogue content at the one or more destination addresses corresponding to the extracted dialogue scenario;
- determining billing totals regarding the dialogue content according to the billing criteria;

and

reporting the billing totals to the destination addresses for the dialogue content.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information-gathering device for holding dialogues with customers based on dialogue scenarios, the information-gathering device comprising:

a dialogue scenario storage unit storing dialogue scenarios;

a billing storage unit storing billing criteria for billing for transmitted dialogue scenarios;

a scenario storage unit storing and assigning-storing first correspondences between each of the dialogue scenarios and destination addresses;

a customer information storage unit assigning-storing second correspondences between customer-identifying data and customer information;

a customer-specifying unit accepting input of the customer-identifying data;

a processing unit extracting from said customer information storage ~~means~~ unit, ~~corresponding~~ customer information corresponding to the customer-identifying data input using the customer-specifying unit according to the second correspondences, and associating the corresponding customer information with the dialogue content;

an extraction unit extracting from the dialogue scenarios, a dialogue scenario to be performed;

a dialogue unit holding a dialogue with a customer following the extracted dialogue scenario;

a content acquiring unit acquiring a dialogue content from the dialogue; and

an information transmission unit transmitting the dialogue content to the destination addresses corresponding to the extracted dialogue scenario according to the first correspondences;

a billing unit determining billing totals regarding the dialogue content according to the billing criteria; and

a notification unit reporting the billing totals to the destination addresses for the dialogue content.

3. (CANCELLED).

4. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The information-gathering device set forth in claim 2, further comprising dialogue storage unit storing the dialogue content.

5. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The information-gathering device set forth in claim 2, further comprising a merchandise-specifying unit accepting input of merchandise identification data for identifying merchandise,

wherein said scenario storage unit correspondingly assigns merchandise identification data to each of the dialogue scenarios, and stores as the destination addresses, communications addresses for providers of the merchandise identified by the merchandise identification data;

wherein said extraction unit extracts the dialogue scenario corresponding to input merchandise identification data; and

wherein said information transmission unit transmits the dialogue content to the communications addresses corresponding to the merchandise identification data.

6. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The information-gathering device set forth in claim 2, further comprising a merchandise name-specifying unit accepting merchandise classification input,

wherein said scenario storage unit further stores merchandise classifications and stores as the destination addresses, communications addresses for providers of merchandise identified by the merchandise classifications;

wherein said extraction unit extracts the dialogue scenario corresponding to an input merchandise classification; and

wherein said information transmission unit transmits the dialogue content to the communications addresses corresponding to the input merchandise classification.

7. (CANCELLED).

8. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The information-gathering device set forth in claim 2, further comprising: compensation determining unit determining compensation for the dialogue; and

compensation notification unit reporting the compensation to the customer with whom the dialogue has been held.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer-readable storage medium on which is recorded an information-gathering program utilized in an information-gathering device for holding dialogues with customers based on dialogue scenarios, the information-gathering program when

executed controlling the information-gathering device to perform a method comprising:

- storing dialogue scenarios;
- storing billing criteria for billing for transmitted dialogue scenarios;
- ~~assigning~~ storing first correspondences between each of the dialogue scenarios and destination addresses;
- ~~assigning~~ storing second correspondences between customer-identifying data and customer information;
- accepting input of the customer-identifying data;
- extracting from the dialogue scenarios, a dialogue scenario to be performed;
- holding a dialogue with a customer following the extracted dialogue scenario, the customer being identified based on the customer-identifying data;
- acquiring dialogue content from the dialogue;
- extracting customer information corresponding to the inputted customer-identifying data according to the second correspondences;
- associating the extracted customer information with the dialogue content; ~~and~~
- transmitting the dialogue content and the customer information to the destination addresses corresponding to the extracted dialogue scenario according to the first correspondences;
- determining billing totals regarding the dialogue content according to the billing criteria;
- and
- reporting the billing totals to the destination addresses for the dialogue.

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information-gathering computer program product enabling a computer to hold dialogues with customers based on dialogue scenarios, comprising:

- a dialogue scenario storage unit storing dialogue scenarios;
- a billing criteria storage storing billing criteria for billing for transmitted dialogue scenarios;
- a scenario storage unit ~~assigning~~ storing first correspondences between each of the dialogue scenarios and destination addresses;
- a customer information storage unit ~~assigning~~ storing second correspondences between customer-identifying data and customer information;
- a customer-specifying unit accepting input of the customer-identifying data;
- a processing unit extracting from said customer information storage means,

corresponding customer information corresponding to the customer-identifying data input using the customer-specifying unit according to the second correspondences, and associating the corresponding customer information with the dialogue content;

an extraction unit extracting from the dialogue scenarios, a dialogue scenario to be performed;

a dialogue unit holding a dialogue with a customer following the extracted dialogue scenario;

a content acquiring unit acquiring a dialogue content from the dialogue; and

an information transmission unit transmitting the dialogue content to the destination addresses corresponding to the extracted dialogue scenario, according to the first correspondences;

a billing unit determining billing totals regarding the dialogue content; and

a notification unit reporting the billing totals to the destination addresses for the dialogue content.

11. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A computer terminal comprising:

information-gathering unit connected via a network to the information-gathering device set forth in claim 2, gathering dialogue content transmitted from said information-gathering device;

information storage unit storing the gathered dialogue content; and

output unit outputting the stored dialogue content.

12-14 (CANCELLED).